

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5643

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ROLDOS/HURTADO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY TO COMBAT PLOTS

1. STILL DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT CONTINUING REPORTS OF EFFORTS TO
SIDETRACK THEIR CANDIDACY, JAIME ROLDOS AND OSVALDO HURTADO
AND THEIR ADVISORS APPEAR TO BE IMPLEMENTING A TWO-FOLD STRATEGY
TO FOIL THOSE PLOTS AND KEEP THE RETORNO ON TRACK. ONE APPROACH
HAS BEEN TO MAKE PUBLIC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE RUMORS
OF PLOTS OR OTHER ACTION THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM.
HURTADO APPEARED ON A TV NEWS SHOW ON AUGUST 11 AND
DENOUNCED A PLOT TO NULLIFY VOTES IN FEBRES CORDERO PARISH
OF GUAYAQUIL, ONE OF THE "SUBURBIO" PARISHES WHERE HE AND
ROLDOS WERE OVERWHELMING FAVORITES. SIMILARLY, ON AUGUST 7
THE CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES (CFP) TOOK OUT LARGE PAID
ADS IN MOST PAPERS TO MAKE PUBLIC A PLOT AGAINST ROLDOS-HURTADO.
THE ADS SHOWED HAND-WRITTEN NOTES PURPORTED TO HAVE BEEN
PREPARED BY ONE OF THE CONSPIRATORS WHICH CALLED FOR
NUMEROUS STEPS TO DISCREDIT THE CFP CANDIDATES, INCLUDING
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FOMENTING ECONOMIC PANIC, TYING HURTADO TO THE RODRIGUEZ LARA
DICTATORSHIP, TYING THE CFP/DP TO THE BRIZ KIDNAP/MURDER
CASE, COMMENT ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY
(HURTADO'S ORIGINAL PARTY) WITH POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN
CHILE AND PERU, JOIN FORCES WITH THE MEDIA TO BLOCK
ROLDOS, ETC. HURTADO SUGGESTED THAT THE MEMO WAS JOINTLY
PREPARED BY GUAYAQUIL OLIGARCHS LEON FEBRES-CORDERO,

OTTO AROSEMENA, AND HEINZ MOELLER.

2. THE SECOND APPROACH OF THE COUNTER-STRATEGY APPEARS TO TAKE A LEAF FROM THE PLOT EXPOSED IN THE AUGUST 7 AD. ROLDOS AND HURTADO HAVE ASSIDUOUSLY CULTIVATED THE MEDIA, MAKING A SERIOUS EFFORT TO KEEP IT STRONGLY IN SUPPORT OF CARRYING THROUGH WITH THE RETORNO. THEY ACHIEVED NOTABLE SUCCESS WHEN, ON AUGUST 10, ALL OF THE GUAYAQUIL MEDIA -- NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, TV AND RADIO STATIONS -- JOINED IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE CALLING FOR RAPID AND IMPARTIAL COMPLETION OF THE VOTE COUNT, SERIOUSNESS ON THE PART OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN OVERSEEING THAT PROCESS AND IN THEIR PUBLIC DECLARATIONS, AND CONTINUED FIRMNESS BY THE ARMED FORCES IN GUARANTEEING THE RETORNO WITHOUT DEVIATION.

3. COMMENT: WHILE REPORTS OF PLOTS INVOLVING THE DISQUALIFICATION OF VOTES IN GUAYAQUIL HAVE BEEN COMMON RECENTLY, HURTADO'S MENTION OF FEBRES CORDERO AS THE PLACE WHERE VOTES WILL BE NULLIFIED IS THE FIRST SPECIFIC PUBLIC ALARM. BY MAKING CERTAIN THAT THE PUBLIC IS AWARE OF POTENTIAL PLOTS ROLDOS AND HURTADO HOPE TO UNDERCUT THE PLOTTERS' RELIANCE ON SURPRISE AS WELL AS THE VEIL OF RESPECTABILITY THAT THEY DEPEND ON. WHILE THIS WILL NOT BE THE DECIDING FACTOR IN PREVENTING ANTI-ROLDOS PLOTS, IT WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT WEIGHT.

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